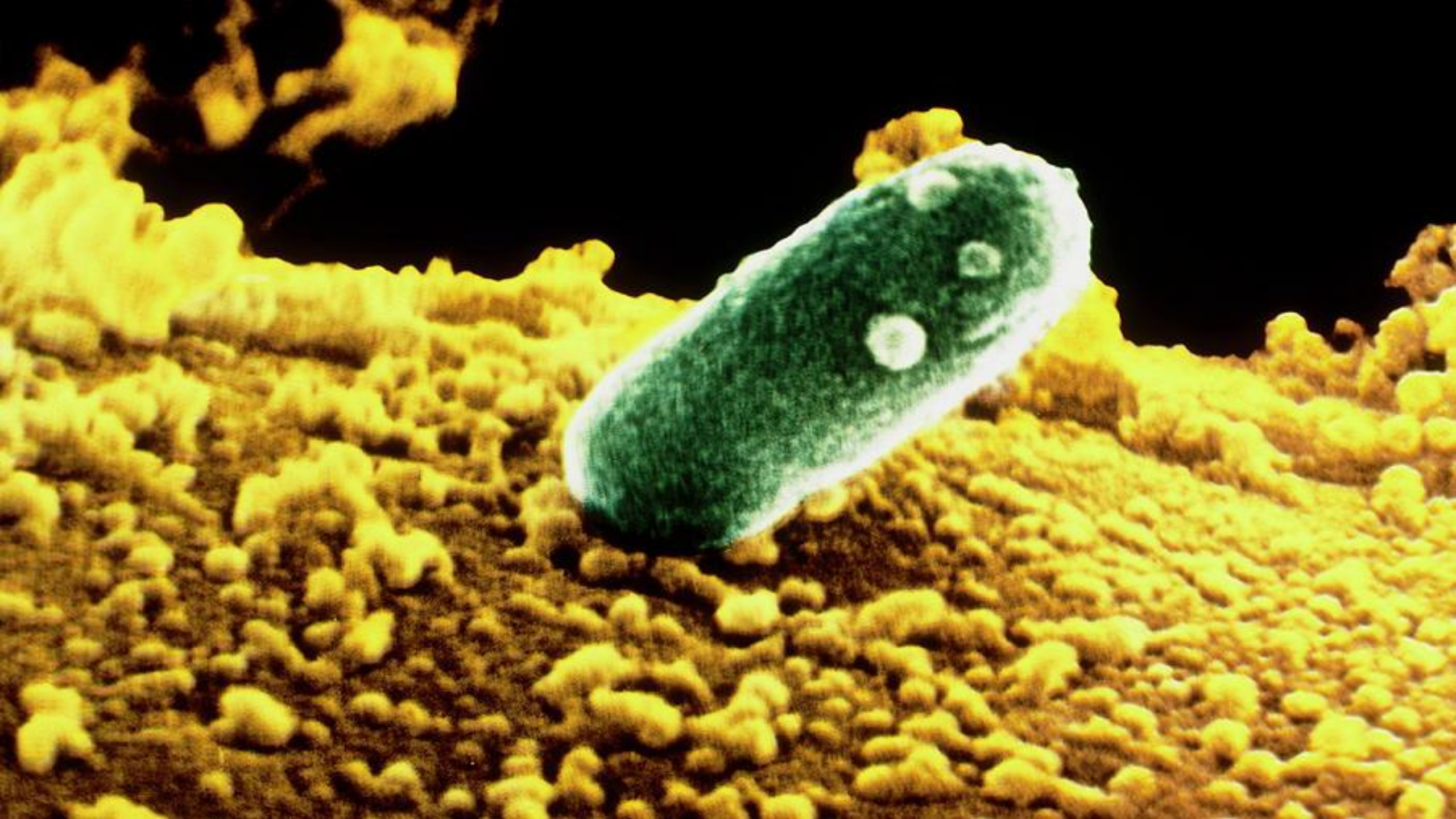
Food and Culture

FOOD MEANING AND PRACTICE

WWW.ERIKCHEVRIER.CA













Source: Conservation Research Institute

What is Soil?

Soil Structure

•What is soil made of?

Soil Nutrients

•What nutrients do plants get from soil, and why are they important?

•How do you think these nutrients get into the soil?

Soil Biodiversity

•Soil is full of life—what kinds of organisms live there?

•How might they help plants grow or improve our food?

History of Soil

•How have human activities—from traditional farming to industrial agriculture—changed soil over time?

Soil and Plant Health

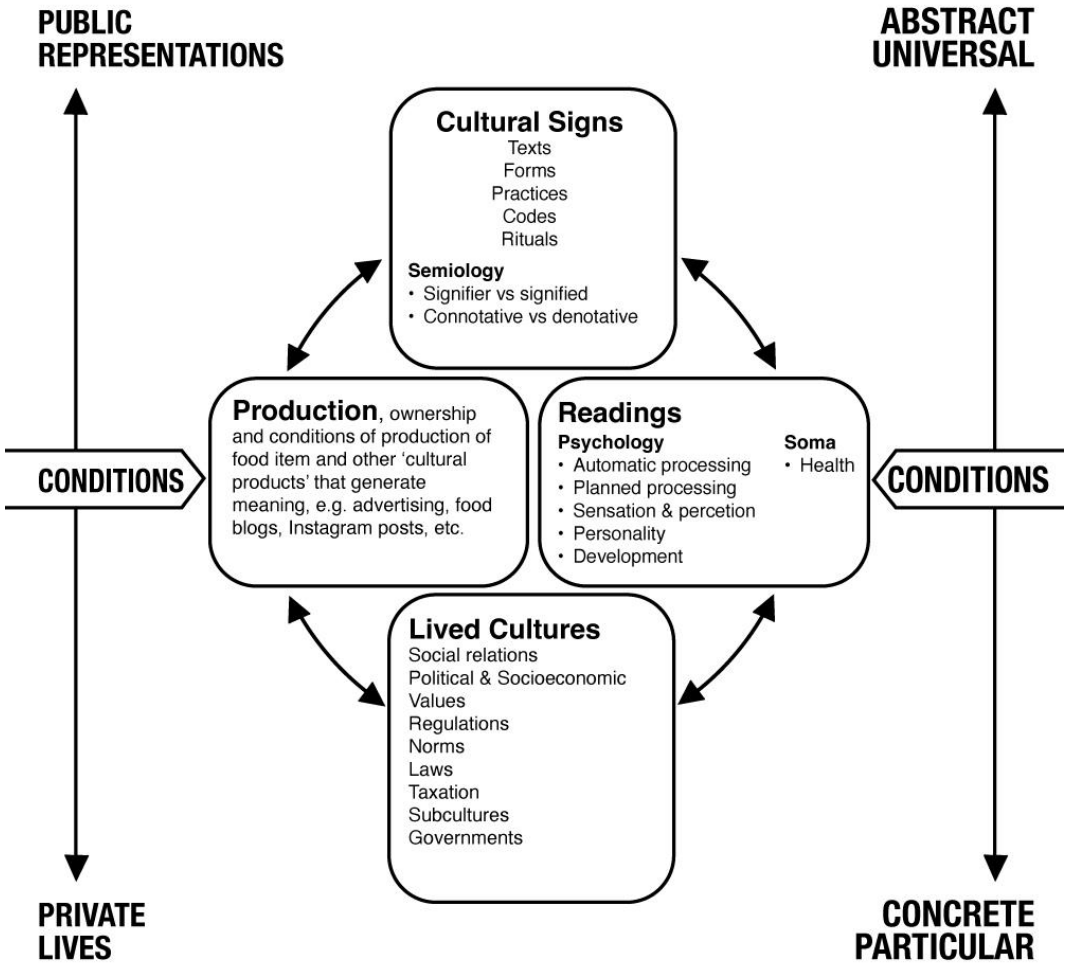
•How does healthy soil support plant growth and food quality?

•What problems might arise if soil is unhealthy or damaged?

Soil, Food Systems & Colonialism

•Who controls soil and farmland, and how does that influence what food is available, how it's grown, and who benefits?

How is Your Plant Doing?


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Cheetos
Flamin' Hot
Puffs


Cheetos
Puffs
Souffles
VALUE
ECONO
410 g

Production

Who produces the food item?

What means are used to produce the food item?

- Labour conditions?
- Materials?
- Means of production?

Who produces the cultural signs of the food item?

- What means are used to produce the cultural signs of the food item?
- Labour conditions?
- Materials?
- Means of production?

Are the conditions of production more public or private?

Are there any other conditions of production that are important to identify?

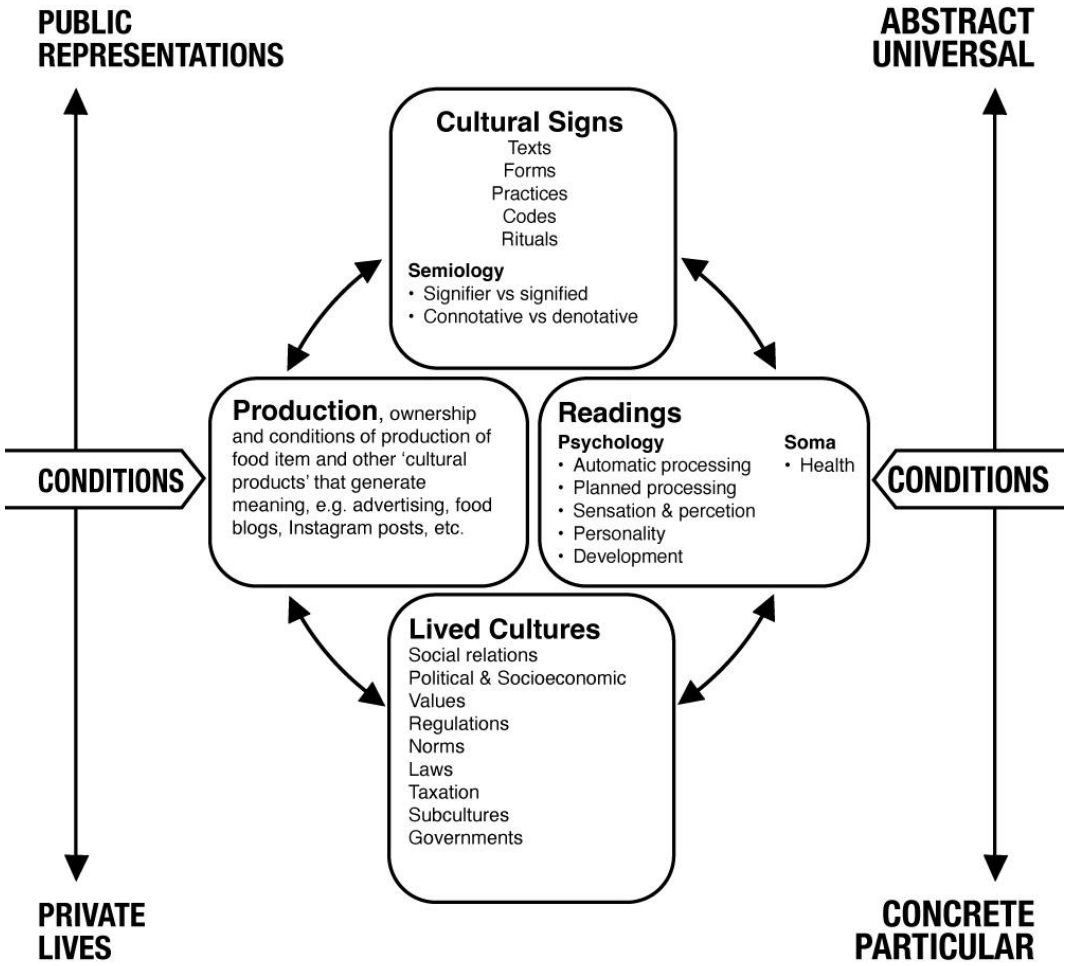
Who Owns Cheetos?



Who Owns?



Who Owns?


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Semiotics

- Is an analytic method that complements **context** and **medium** specificity, by focusing on broad **cultural processes** by which **meaning is produced and communicated across a range of cultural forms**.
- Is the study of **how meaning is produced and reproduced within a society.**
- Provides us with **powerful tools for analyzing the meaning of food** as well as helping us **gain some distance from everyday practices of communication of meaning**, so that we can look at them, with new eyes and understand them in new ways.
- Involves 'unnatural tasks' (Bignell, 1997) such as **abstracting the meaning from its environment**, and then **breaking it down into constituent parts (signs),** working out **what they mean** and **how they're organized**, then trying to determine potential **ambiguities or alternative readings**.

Semiotics

Sign – Most basic discrete unit of meaning

- Word, colour, sound, set of lines, shapes,
- Like atoms, we can dissect individual units

Assemblages – Collections of signs (that carry meaning)

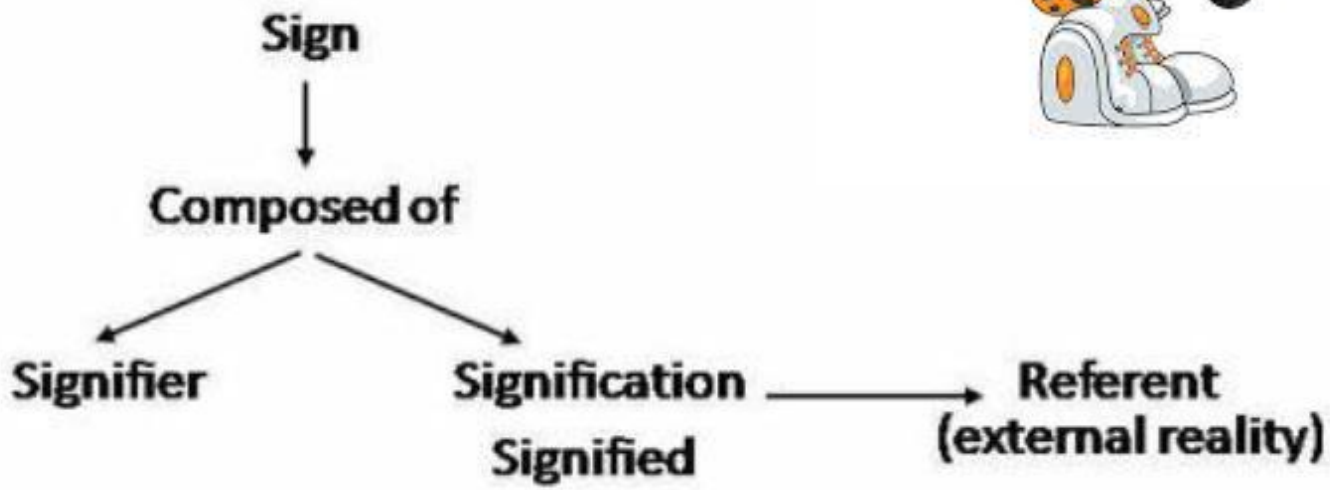
- Texts, codes, practices, rituals, forms.

Ferdinand de Saussure – Understand power and flexibility of language as a social construction through which meaning is organized.

- Language is a structure that allows for flexibility and consistency.
- Meaning between signifier and signified is arbitrary

  (flexible and consistent)
- Meaning is produced through cultural conventions
- Langue – Giant system of grammar and vocabulary
- Parole – Grammar and vocabulary can be manipulated





Nutrition Facts

About 17 servings per container
Serving size About 21 pieces (28g)

Amount per serving

Calories 160

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 11g	**14%**
Saturated Fat 1.5g	**7%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	**0%**
Sodium 200mg	**9%**
Total Carbohydrate 15g	**5%**
Dietary Fiber less than 1g	**3%**
Total Sugars 0g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 10mg	0%
Iron 0.6mg	2%
Potassium 100mg	2%

Not a significant source of added sugars.

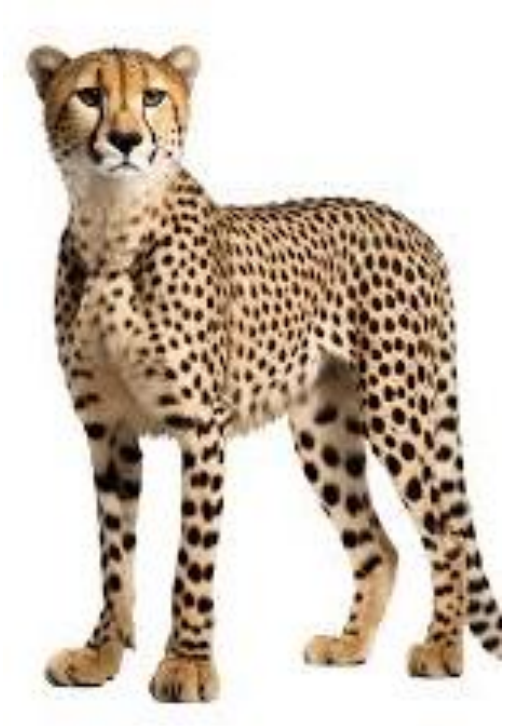
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.



INGREDIENTS: ENRICHED CORN MEAL (CORN MEAL, FERROUS SULFATE, NIACIN, THIAMIN MONONITRATE, RIBOFLAVIN, FOLIC ACID), VEGETABLE OIL (CORN, CANOLA, AND/OR SUNFLOWER OIL), AND LESS THAN 2% OF SALT, YEAST EXTRACT, MONOSODIUM GLUTAMATE, POTASSIUM SALT, CITRIC ACID, MALTODEXTRIN (MADE FROM CORN), ARTIFICIAL COLOR (RED 40 LAKE, YELLOW 6 LAKE, YELLOW 6, YELLOW 5), CORN SYRUP SOLIDS, HYDROLYZED CORN PROTEIN, CHEDDAR CHEESE (MILK, CHEESE CULTURES, SALT, ENZYMES), ONION POWDER, SUGAR, WHEY, LIME JUICE, WHEY PROTEIN CONCENTRATE, GARLIC POWDER, NATURAL FLAVORS, BUTTERMILK, SODIUM DIACETATE, DISODIUM INOSINATE, AND DISODIUM GUANYLATE.
CONTAINS MILK INGREDIENTS.

Signs and Symbols





Break down meaning into constituent signs and coherent signs

- Parts vs sum of parts vs complete whole

- Denotative meaning of a sign
  - Obvious, literal meaning of the sign
- Connotative meaning of a sign
  - Symbolic, seemingly secondary, more metaphorical meanings
  - More socially conditioned

- What is the meaning of cheetah?

Signs and Symbols





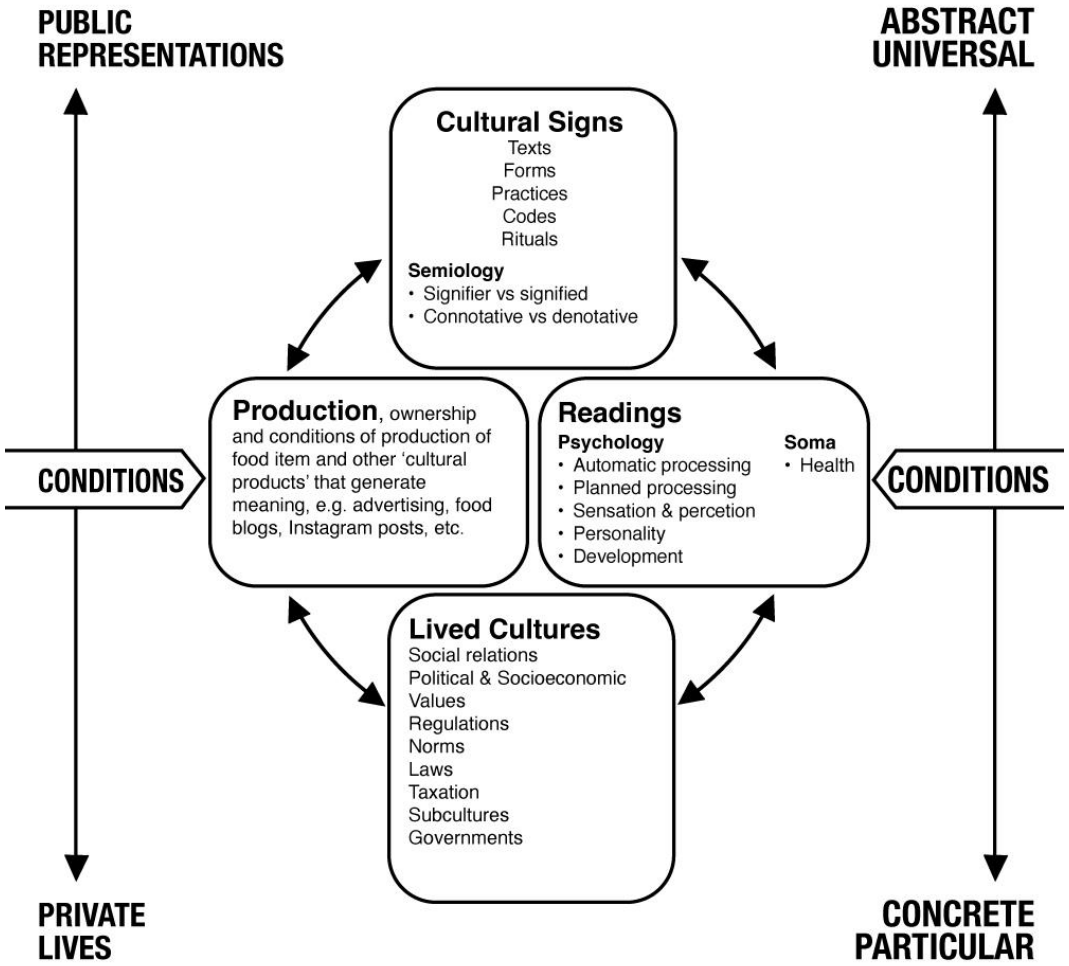
[Cheetos ad 1989]

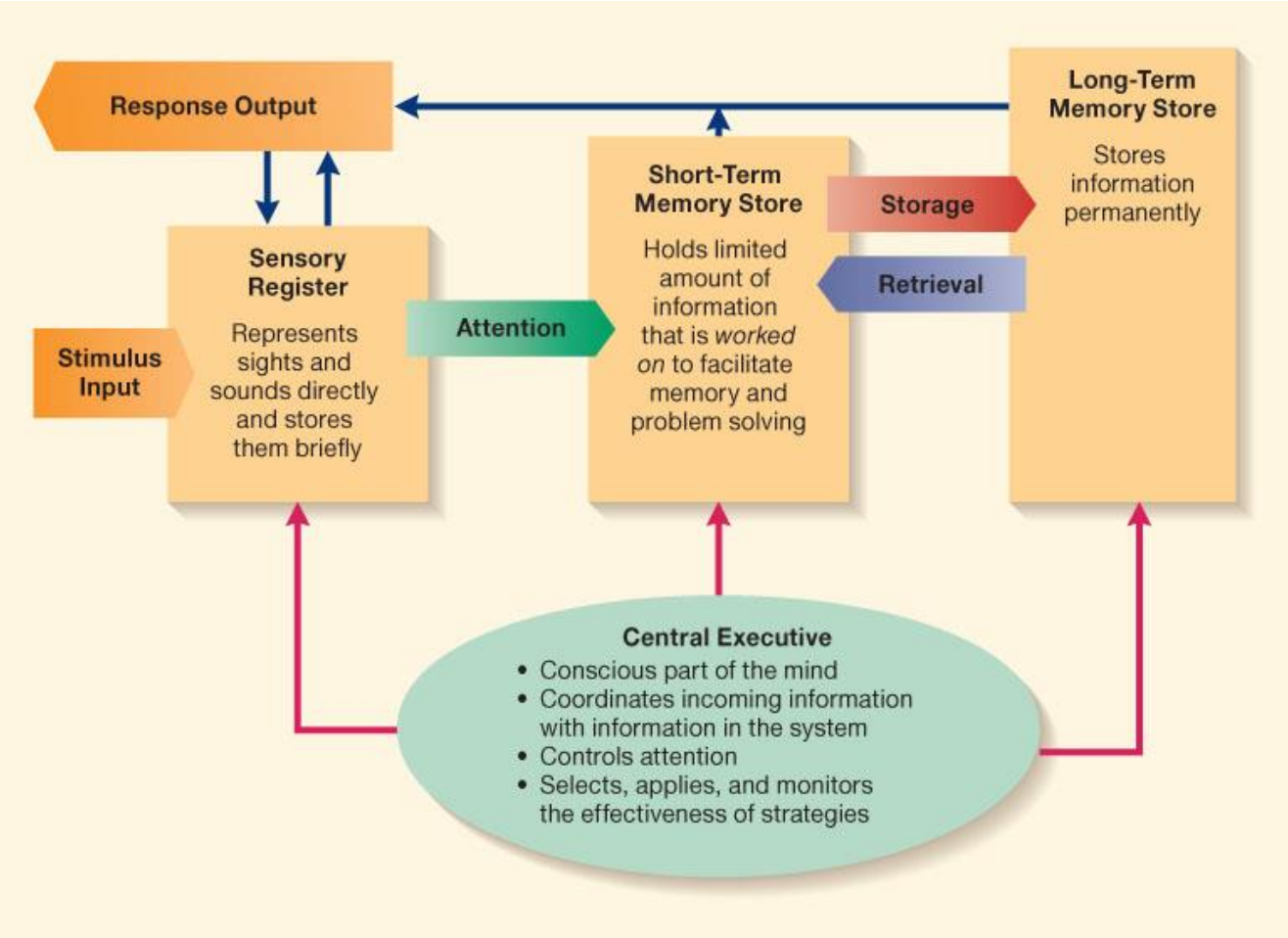
[Cheetos 1972]

[Cheetos Commercials Compilation]

[Contemporary Cheetos Ad]

What other signs and symbols can you find from Cheetos?


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Information Processing Model

Automatic Thinking – Low Effort Thinking

Automatic thinking – Is thought that is generally unconscious, unintentional, involuntary, and effortless.

Schemas – Mental structures people use to organize their knowledge about the social world themselves and that influence the information people notice, think about, and remember.

- We tend to fill in the blanks with SCHEMA-CONSISTENT INFORMATION.

How People are Affected By Profuse Amounts of Publicity? – Advertising and Priming

Activity – Automatic Thinking!

SAY THIS WORD OUTLOUD 10 TIMES

SAY THIS WORD OUTLOUD 10 TIMES

SILK



WHAT DO COWS DRINK?

Automatic Thinking About Food

Coffee

Carrot

Salad

Bread

Eggs

Dessert

Soup

Rice

Sandwich

Cake

Breakfast

Cheese

Steak

Tomato

Fruit

Candy

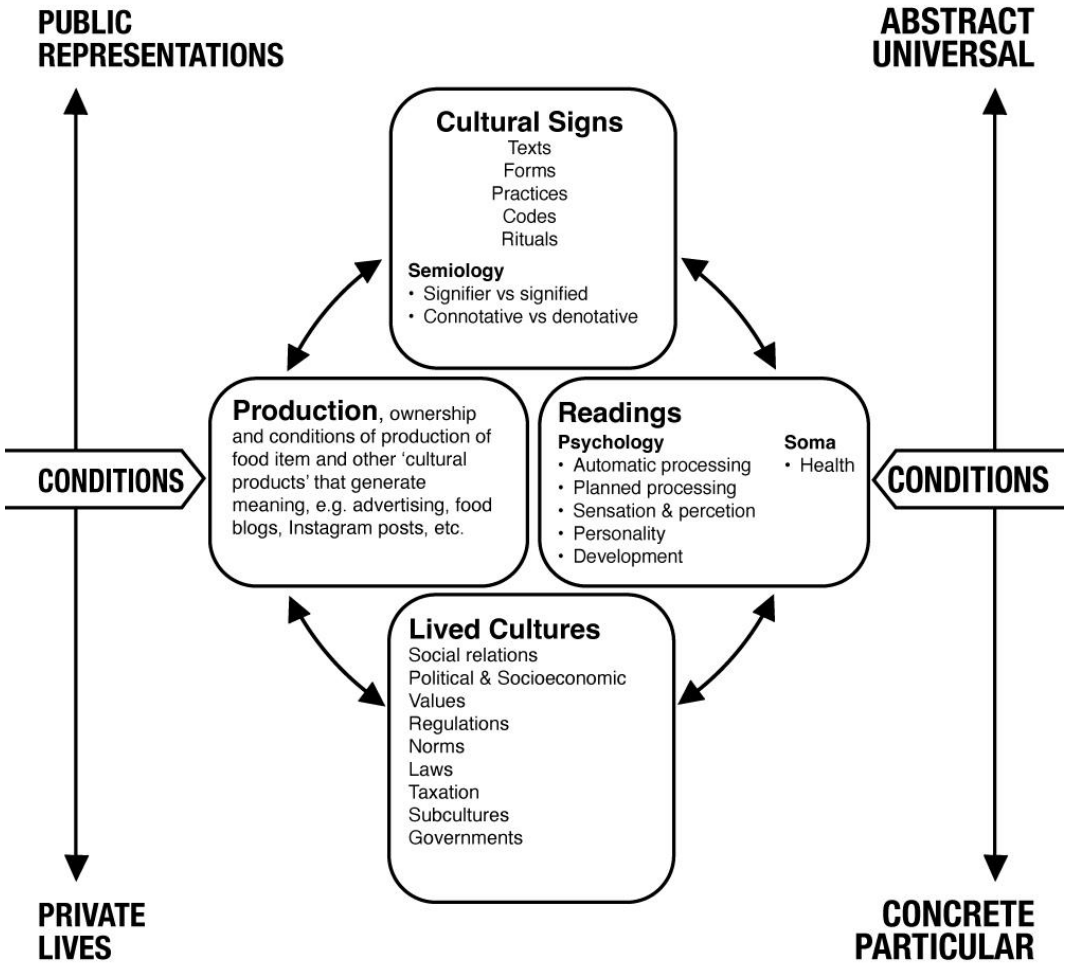
Pizza

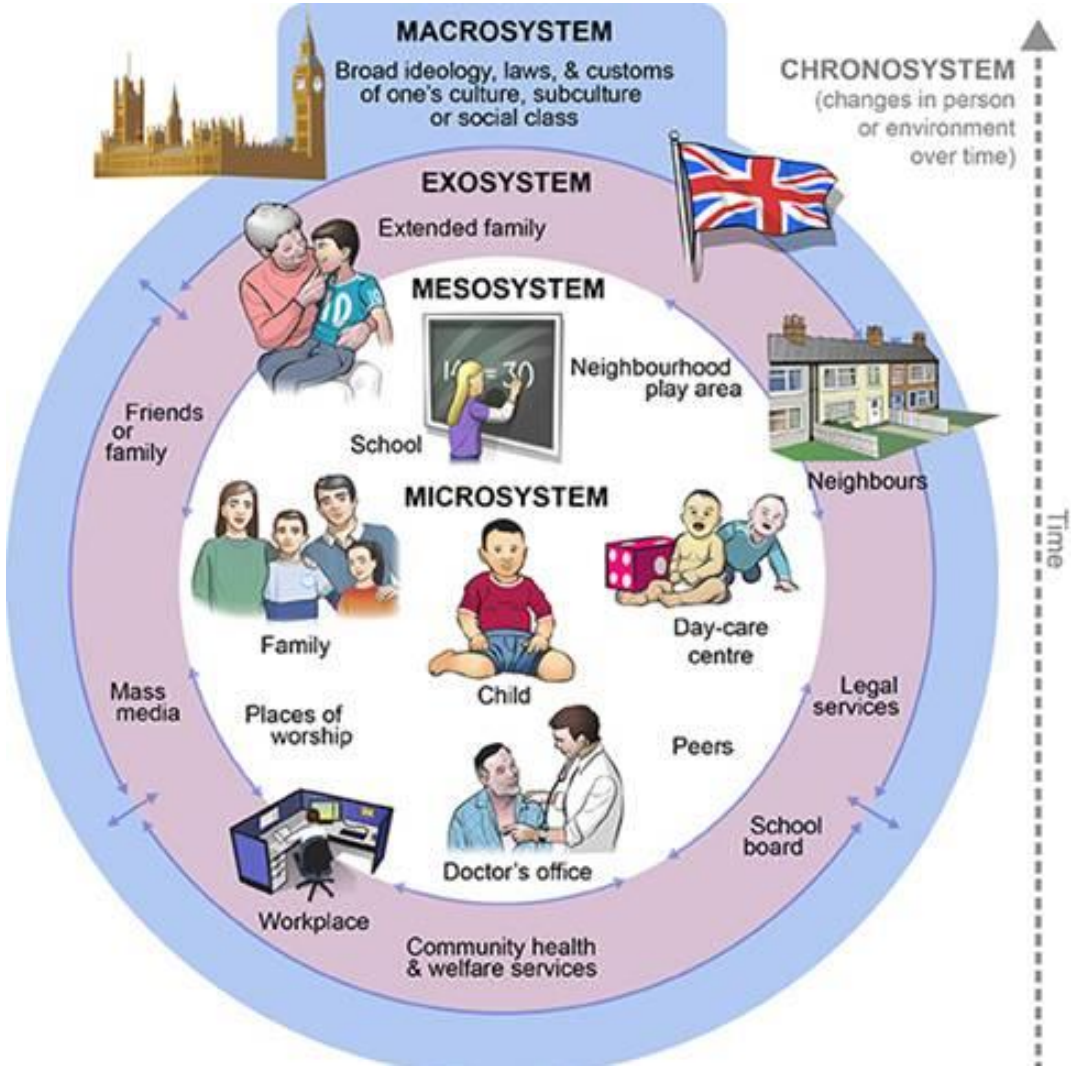
Fried Food

Corn

Potato

Froot Loops


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Ecological Systems Theory of Development

Please Think About and Answer the Following Questions

How important is food to you – apart from eating for sustenance?

What is the relation between food and your personal and/or cultural identity?

How does culture influence your eating practices? How can your eating practices influence your cultural identity?

When (and how frequently) do your food choices involve conscious awareness and how many choices are more automatic? Which food choices are more automatic, and which are more planned?

What types of food practices do you participate in? What kind of rituals do you practice? Are they the same across social groups?

Choose a food item and perform a cultural analysis using the model.

Further Discussion Questions

How We Understand Cultural Signs (Readings)

How do you notice signs automatically versus when you stop to think about them?
How do your senses, body, or health shape what stands out?
How does your identity influence what signs mean?
Can groups understand the same sign differently?

How Context Shapes Meaning (Lived Cultures)

How do your close environments (family, friends, school) influence meaning?
How do connections between different settings affect meaning?
How do larger forces (culture, media, laws) shape signs?
Can meanings change over time or across generations?

Food for Thought

Pick one food item you encounter regularly.
Ask yourself: What cultural signs or symbols does this food carry?
Consider both:

- How individuals and groups notice and interpret it (Readings)
- How time, place, and environment shape its meaning (Lived Cultures)

Thanks!

Have a great week! Don’t forget to water your seed!